

PRESS RELEASE

Congressman John Conyers, Jr.

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Ranking Member, Committee on the Judiciary
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CONYERS DISMISSES ASHCROFT'S VISA OFFER TO TERROR INFORMANTS

Today, Attorney General John Ashcroft announced a new "Responsible Cooperators Program" that promises non-citizens who provide critical information on terrorist threats with assistance in obtaining visas to enter the United States.

Congressman John Conyers Jr., Ranking Member of the House Judiciary Committee issued the following statement in response to this announcement:

"This news is no news at all. Current law allows for people to be rewarded with entry and residency assistance if they provide critical information on terrorist activity. After having already burned its bridges with the Arab American community by secretly detaining hundreds of individuals engaging in racial and ethnic profiling and pressuring young men to submit to intimidating interviews and allowing the Government to spy on attorney-client conversations, the Department is now seeking their help. Offering a reward to the very people it has alienated is unlikely to yield any positive result.

"The Attorney General is now adopting a bait and switch approach to encourage non-citizens to provide information on terrorist threats without allaying the fear that non-citizens in the U.S. will not be deported when they come forward with information that is deemed unhelpful or irrelevant."

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